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For Immediate Release: December 28, 2007  
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**Fire Standard Compliant Cigarettes Now the Law in Massachusetts**

Kevin M. Burke, Secretary of Public Safety and Security and State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan said, "On January 1, 2008 the so-called *fire safe cigarette law* takes effect in Massachusetts." It also takes effect in Maine on New Year's Day and during the summer in neighboring Connecticut and Rhode Island. This law is already in effect in 22 states including New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

The new law, now codified at M.G.L. c. 64C, § 2A-2F, requires that all cigarettes sold or offered for sale in Massachusetts, shall meet the same testing criteria for fire standard compliant cigarettes, as in New York State, the first state to pass such legislation.

**Smoking Leading Cause of Fatal Fires Since WWII**

Smoking has been the leading cause of fatal fires in Massachusetts since World War II according to available records. Nationally, smoking is also the leading cause of fatal fires. In 2006, 32% of residential fire deaths in Massachusetts were due to smoking. State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan said, "The expectation is that when the effect of this law is fully realized, it will help to reduce the number of fatal fires and fire deaths."

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) has promulgated regulations and designated the Department of Fire Services (DFS) as the implementation agency. The final regulations became effective on December 14, 2007 when published in the Massachusetts Register. An unofficial copy of the regulations can be found on the DFS web site and the official copy may be obtained from the Massachusetts Secretary of State at the State House Book Store.

DFS has notified manufacturers of the procedures to submit their brands for certification to the new *Massachusetts Fire Standard Compliant Certification Program*. New York has 737 brands certified as compliant and it is expected Massachusetts will have a similar number. Staff will be hired to manage the certification, enforcement, testing and oversight process. There is a fee of \$3,000 per brand sold in the state, renewable every three years, to cover the cost of making sure the cigarettes sold in the state meet these

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new requirements. Enforcement is considered a critical component of the law's effectiveness and the fees cover independent testing and purchasing of cigarettes.

Wholesalers and retailers will be able to sell off existing inventory that had the Massachusetts tax stamp on it prior to January 1, 2008. Such inventories are not to exceed the previous year's inventory at the same time in order to avoid any dumping onto the Massachusetts market. This means that there will be some non-compliant cigarettes on the shelves for a while. However, on the positive side, many compliant cigarettes are reportedly already on some store shelves.

All cigarette packages will have to be marked according to standards that indicate they meet the reduced ignition propensity standards. People should look for these marks when purchasing cigarettes.

For more information look at the Department of Fire Services website at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) or contact the Coalition for Fire Safe Cigarettes at [www.firesafecigarettes.org](http://www.firesafecigarettes.org).